Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE)
2026 Graduate Student Grant Call for Proposals

Amount Funded: $22,000
Project Duration: Two (2) years
Proposal submission deadline: May 8, 2026 at 12 p.m. (NOON) EST
Online submission link: SARE Grant Management System

Read more about the requirements for Graduate Student Grants before applying. Questions should be directed to the grant manager, Candace Pollock-Moore at southern-gs@sare.org or call 770-412-4786.

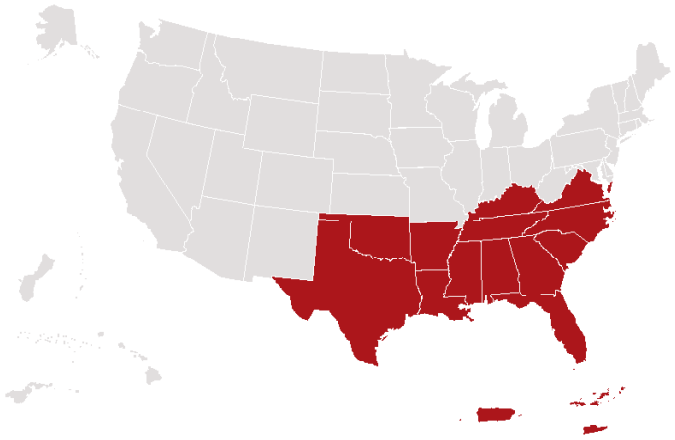
About SARE

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is a U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grants and outreach program.

Competitive research grants, offered annually, are the primary tools of the SARE program. SARE seeks out innovations in sustainable agriculture, and rewards grant applicants who offer interesting and potentially workable ideas. SARE also emphasizes outreach and the dissemination of project results so the grant programs will have the widest possible benefits.

Southern SARE is one of four regional SARE programs, hosted by University of Georgia, Fort Valley State University and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Southern SARE accepts proposals from applicants in the Southern region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Learn more about Southern SARE at https://southern.sare.org



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Southern SARE Graduate Student Grants

Overview

SARE may be a small program compared to other USDA agricultural funding efforts, but it consistently has an impact out of proportion to its budget. One aspect of the program contributing to this success is the high level of continued engagement researchers have with the SARE program; researchers and extension specialists routinely revisit SARE as a source of grant funding for sustainable agriculture projects.

This relationship is best illustrated through the Graduate Student Grant program. The grant was started in 2000 to give Master's and PhD students the opportunity to conduct sustainable agriculture research projects. It has been a vehicle to apply for other SARE grants as students further their research careers.

The main objective of the Graduate Student Grants is to prepare the next generation of scientists in researching sustainable solutions to the challenges farmers and ranchers face each day, and to prepare young professionals to work together with other scientists, educators, and farmers to test sustainable ag theories in real-world, on-farm situations.

Graduate Student Grant Schedule

February 2026: Calls for Proposals Released
May 8, 2026: Proposals Due
August 2026: Selected Proposals Funded and Announced

IMPORTANT! Graduate Student Grants can only be used by the graduate student who submitted the proposal. If a graduate student transfers to another institution, the grant cannot follow the student. If the graduate student cannot complete the project or graduates prior to the project end date, the grant cannot be transferred to another graduate student without SSARE approval.

Eligibility Requirements

- Master's and PhD students enrolled full-time at accredited institutions in the Southern region at the time of proposal submission.

- A graduate student may receive only one Graduate Student Grant during a Master's program, and only one Graduate Student Grant during a PhD program. Graduate Students who received a SARE grant under their Master's program may apply for a Graduate Student Grant under a PhD program.

- Institutions can be from within the land-grant system or other colleges and universitites outside

the land-grant system.

- Graduate Student Grant projects must address sustainable agriculture issues of current and potential importance to the Southern region.

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Proposed projects must focus on Southern SARE's program objectives in developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing farming systems toward sustainability, as defined by Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill.

A simple way to think about sustainable agriculture is that it involves producing enough food and fiber to satisfy today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Sustainability as defined by the SARE program embraces three common goals:

- Profit over the long term;
- Stewardship of our nation's land, air and water;
- Quality of life for farmers, ranchers, farm employees and our communities.

There are almost as many ways to reach these goals as there are farms and ranches in America. Learn more about how some of the most common practices can enhance sustainability for all farms through the SARE sampler of proven practices: "What is Sustainable Agriculture?"

USDA-NIFA Statement

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- Solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- Protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- Supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- Expanding and developing domestic markets;
- Training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- Fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

Consider these research areas as a sustainable agriculture topic in your proposal:

Beneficial Insect Habitat: Developing cover crops or other plant mixes and locations to provide habitat (refuges) that keep populations of native beneficial insects living on the farm ready to attack crop pests as they occur.

Alternative Crops/Animals: Developing alternative crops, animals or products that help a producer's operation become more economically sustainable. These projects must be at least as environmentally sustainable as the existing crops, animals or products they supplement or replace.

Organic Agriculture: Projects that address the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of organic farm products. This includes farmers adding value to organic products. Research into farming systems and practices that make use of on-farm biological cycles for soil, plant and pest management are accepted.

Sustainable Agriculture Marketing Projects: Developing markets for existing or alternative crops, animals or products.

Sustainable Grazing Systems: Use of native grass species and/or plant or animal management systems to make grazing systems more sustainable.

Soil Organic Matter Building/Protection/Management: Projects that increase the sustainability of farming systems by developing soil organic matter and soil biota.

Natural Resources/Conservation/Water Quality: Projects that increase the sustainability of farming systems using methods that support natural resources, enhance environmental conservation, or improve water quality.

Increasing Sustainability of Existing Farming Practices: Any practice or system that increases the sustainability of an existing farming practice. The results should be able to be used by other farmers.

Appropriate Technology: Projects that develop a device or piece of machinery that promotes sustainable agriculture and can't be purchased off the shelf. The device or machinery must have application for farmers/ranchers, be able to be built by them and enable them to operate more sustainably.

Agroforestry: The use of trees in farm systems to promote sustainability, including water quality and quantity.

Socio-economic/Community: Projects pertaining to impacts of sustainable agriculture in rural and urban communities in the social sciences realm.

Looking for more sustainable agriculture research ideas?

Visit SARE's national projects database to learn more about funded projects. Over 9,000 research and education projects have been funded nationally.

https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/

Preparing Your Proposal

Refer to the following template when preparing your proposal. The information provided here is required for submitting your proposal online. **When you are ready to submit your proposal, apply in the SARE Grant Management System. Be sure you submit your proposal prior to the deadline. Once the May 8, 2026 application deadline passes, the online system will close and late proposals will not be accepted.**

A. Basic Information

Project Title

The title of the proposed project.

Major Professor (Principal Investigator)

List the major professor as the principal investigator, the lead institution/organization, full address, telephone, and e-mail. Graduate students may submit the proposal, but they cannot be PIs on the project. The institution/organization the Major Professor (PI) is associated with is considered the leading institution and will receive the grant funding.

Graduate Student

List the graduate student, lead institution/organization name, full address, telephone, and e-mail.

Major Professor and Graduate Student Experience and Roles (Weighted Score: 5)

Briefly describe the experience relative to the project and the role in the project for the major professor and graduate student. Limited to 250 words.

Review Criteria: *Graduate Student (with major professor's support) has the experience to complete the proposed research project.*

Institutional Administrative Contact

List the name of the administrative contact, including institution name, full address, telephone, and e-mail. The administrative contact is the person who handles grant contracts and has signature authority.

Institutional Financial Contact

List the name of the financial contact, including institution name, full address, telephone, and e-mail. The financial contact is the person who submits invoices and answers questions concerning invoicing and payments.

Type of Institution

Indicate the type of the main institution applying for the grant. This can include 1862 land-grant university, 1890 land-grant university, other college/university, NGO, or government.

Project Start Date

The project start date for the SSARE 2026 Graduate Student Grant will be September 1, 2026. This date is firm.

Project End Date

Project duration is limited to two years. The ending date would be 08/31/2028.

Primary State

Indicate the state where the research will be conducted.

B. Body of Proposal

Project Abstract

Provide a brief abstract or project summary. Limited to 250 words.

State of the Problem (Weighted Score: 15)

Provide a statement of the problem being addressed and how it is related to, or affects, the sustainability of agriculture. Limited to 500 words.

Review Criteria: *Provide a clear description of the problem and why it needs to be addressed. Include one or more of the three pillars of sustainability.*

Begin the statement of the problem as: **"The purpose of this project is to…."**

Objectives (Weighted Score: 10)

A list of concise project objectives, limited to 200 words.

Review Criteria: *Objectives demonstrate clear goals of the project. They can be realistically completed within the proposed time frame.*

Approaches and Methods (Weighted Score: 25)

Provide a brief description of the methods, demonstrating how your solution works in addressing the problem. What is the methodology? There must be a direct relationship between the approaches and methods and the project relevance to sustainable agriculture. Limited to 500 words.

Review Criteria: *Effectively demonstrate how the solution would work in solving the stated problem. Potential results are practical and useful. Align with items in budget.*

The Approaches and Methods section is where you will test your expected outcome through a research experiment. In this section, you should outline:

- **The site where you will conduct your research;**
- **Your experimental design if your research calls for one;**
- **What you are measuring and the ways you will be measuring it;**
- **The materials and supplies you will be using to conduct your research;**
- **How you will collect your data, how often you will collect it, and what tools you will use;**
- **How you will analyze your data, and what tools you will use;**
- **How you will interpret your data and draw conclusions.**

Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture (Weighted Score: 20)

Review Criteria: *The project demonstrates a clear, realistic relevancy to sustainable agriculture, and illustrates an integrated approach to healthy and resilient production and marketing systems.*

You must demonstrate how your project is relevant to sustainable agriculture. State how the project and the expected results contribute to agricultural sustainability. Don't simply tell us that your project addresses an element of sustainable agriculture, tell us how your project will address it and make it more sustainable. Make sure that your work, even though it is making a part of a system more sustainable, does not make the whole system or another part of it, less sustainable.

Limited to 500 words.

Does your project use genetically engineered varieties or organisms? If so, state how their use will contribute to your project and make agriculture more sustainable.

How will this project improve quality of life for producers, communities and consumers in the Southern region?

Timeline (Weighted Score: 10)

Review Criteria: *The project can be effetively completed in the time provided based on the objectives and proposed solution.*

Provide a timeline of the work to be completed from project start date to project end date. Outline project activities in a chronological timeline that states where, what, when and how long it will take for you to perform your project activities. Limited to 250 words.

What about outreach to farmers?

Outreach is not a required component, but SARE encourages students to think about how farmers can participate in the research project, or how results can be shared with farmers in outreach activities. When relevant, incorporate this information in your proposal.

Literature Cited

List cited literature that supports the justification of the research project being proposed. The literature cited should demonstrate how well the applicant prepared their knowledge of the research topic and the research gaps

C. Budget and Budget Checklist **(Weighted Score: 15)**

Review Criteria: *Clear budget with allowable and realistic requests. Items are itemized and justified with clear descriptions of how they will be used in the project.*

The budget is a list of allowable project expenses. The items in your budget should align with the Approaches and Methods. Refer to the budget checklist attached to the end of this Call for Proposals as a guideline.

BUDGET TIPS

- **Do not breakout your budget by year.**
- **Make sure your expenses are reasonable for the project you are proposing.**
- **Make sure that you value labor on the project for what it is worth. Labor can be charged at the going rate in your area for the skills involved.**
- **Round to whole dollars.**
- **Be detailed in your budget justification, clearly explaining why expenses are necessary. Reviewers look for strong justification for all project expenses.**
- **Funds are for the support of the graduate student on the project.**

Allowable Expenses	Non-allowable Expenses
Materials and supplies needed for the project, including software.	Graduate student stipends, or any other funding the graduate student is receiving to fund his/her education.
Costs of sampling and data analysis, either in the lab or in the field.	Preparation of thesis copy or dissertation copy.
The purchase of equipment. Any equipment obtained becomes the property of the university that funded the graduate student grant.	Salary for the major professor or advisor listed as PI on the project. Funds are for the support of the graduate student on the project.
The rental of equipment or operating charges.	Journal publication costs.
Temporary irrigation and electric fences.	Purchase of classroom books.
Livestock or bees, only if the university does not already have animals available for use. The animals become the property of the university at project end.	Payment of tuition.
Graduate Student Labor. The graduate student may receive up to a maximum of 50 percent of the project total (salary and fringe benefits combined). This is actual identifiable work on the project and NOT a general graduate stipend.	Permanent capital improvements (such as land, buildings, purchase of permanent irrigation or fencing, greenhouses or high tunnels, or the planting or trees, including an orchard).
General labor (such as an undergraduate student or lab technician). If general labor is required for the project, the budget for general labor is capped at 15 percent of the project total (salary and fringe benefits combined). This is actual identifiable work on the project and NOT a general stipend.	Participant incentives (payment must be related to work performed on the project).
Special texts not readily available.	Promotional items (pens with logos, t-shirts, tote bags, etc.)
Travel and per diem necessary for the project.	International travel.
Food and refreshments. You must demonstrate that providing food or refreshments is necessary to effectively execute your grant project.	Breakfast. No breakfast is allowed on any grant in any capacity.
Student travel to one meeting (not to exceed $1,000 including registration) to present his/her SARE-funded research.	Any costs incurred for producing grant-required project annual and final reports.

SARE allows for indirect costs. SARE does not require matching funds/cost-shares.

Indirect Costs

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs. Indirect costs under a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Graduate Student Grant is limited to 10 percent of Total Direct Costs (TDC) or the grantees' Federally Negotiated Rate, whichever is less.

Therefore, when preparing budgets, limit your request for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10 percent of total direct costs awarded. The Indirect Cost of 10 percent Total Direct Costs (TDC) is the maximum allowable. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable indirect cost is considered unallowable.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Definition

If your institution or organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may request a 10 percent de minimus indirect cost rate. The 10 percent de minimus rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC means total direct costs related to the award, such as labor, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, publications, consultant services and travel costs. MTDC excludes the following costs: equipment, capital expenditures, rental costs, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $50,000. Indirect costs cannot be charged on the excluded costs.

To determine MTDC:

Total Direct Cost Amount – (minus) Excluded Costs Amount = MTDC Amount
MTDC Amount X 10 percent de minimus rate = IDC Total

Organizations that do not have a NICRA in place may also waive indirect cost recovery and request only direct research costs. If this option is selected, the organization is required to include in the award budget only those types of costs consistently treated as direct research costs by the organization. If your organization is waiving indirect costs, this must be noted in the budget narrative.

The maximum amount allowed for funding a Graduate Student Grant, even if indirect costs are entered, is still $22,000.

Review your budget thoroughly to ensure expenditures are allowable, proper justification has been provided, and the total direct costs and indirect costs add up correctly. This will aid tremendously in the timeframe it takes to process the award if we do not have to request budget revisions and further justification.

D. Signature Sheet

Before you submit your proposal as final, print a copy of the proposal signature sheet from the online system. It should be signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Organizational Administrative Representative (a representative at your institution who has authority to sign contracts). After scan-

ning your signed signature sheet, the system will allow you to upload it and submit it along with your proposal up to the proposal deadline. Signature sheets can be signed electronically. You may also send in your signature sheet after the proposal deadline. After the proposal deadline, please send the signed signature sheet as an e-mail attachment to Tydaisha White at tydaisha.white@uga.edu.

IMPORTANT! Graduate Students should complete the project within the two-year time frame prior to completing their degree program.

Graduate Students are encouraged to write and submit a Graduate Student Grant. However, they cannot be PIs on the project. PIs must be the major professor or advisor.

Why Apply for a Graduate Student Grant?

- **The program introduces students to grant writing and helps prepare them for an academic career.**
- **The grant introduces students to sustainable agriculture principles and applicable research for farmers/ranchers.**
- **The program helps build a portfolio of published works. Many graduate students publish journal articles on the results of their SARE-funded research.**
- **The program builds relationships between students, farmers and the SARE program.**

How Your Proposal Will Be Reviewed

All funding of Graduate Student Grants is awarded competitively and more proposals may be submitted than receive funding. Your proposal will be less competitive, or may not be funded at all, if it doesn't conform to the requirements in the Call for Proposal.

Upon closure of the grant deadline, proposals receive a technical review by outside technical reviewers across the Southern region with expertise in a wide range of sustainable agriculture research areas. Technical reviewers are assigned to proposals based on their expertise area. The technical review process generally takes 7 weeks.

Technical reviewers score and comment on proposals for technical merit and relevancy of the project to sustainable agriculture based on the following review criteria:

Review Criteria	Points
Qualifications of the Graduate Student	5
Statement of the Problem	15
Objectives	10
Approaches and Methods	25
Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	20
Timeline	10
Budget	15
Total	**100**

- Reviewing the Qualifications of the Graduate Student to determine that the student (with the major professor's support) has the experience and qualifications to conduct the proposed work and can complete the work within proposed timetable.

- Reviewing the Statement of the Problem to ensure that the applicant clearly describes the problem and why the problem needs to be addressed.

- Reviewing the Objectives to ensure that they can realistically be completed within the proposed time frame, and project goals are feasible to obtain by the methods stated.

- Reviewing the Approaches and Methods to determine if the project experiment is clear, well designed and thought out so that useful and applicable results can be obtained.

- Determining how the Project is Relevant to Sustainable Agriculture. How does the project and its expected results contribute to sustainable agriculture? Is the project and its expected results a new and creative innovation? Does the project contribute to the growth of sustainable agriculture by building on and/or adding to existing knowledge? Is it a band-aid to conventional agriculture or does it move the needle in more sustainable farming practices?

- Reviewing the Timeline to determine if the project can be effectively completed in the time provided based on the research proposed. Does the graduate student demonstrate the ability to complete the proposed project?

- Evaluating the project's Budget to determine if the requested amount is reasonable and realistic, and is clear on what the funds will be spent on. Are the requested funds allowable? Are budget items itemized with clear descriptions on how they will be used in the project?

Each proposal is scored as described:

- 100-75 = High priority: Proposal meets the mission/vision of the SARE program, addresses SARE's pillars of sustainability, and fulfills the review criteria. Proposal requirements are met and addresses a topic of need with a unique, innovative, sustainable ag solution. Depending on funding levels, not all high priority proposals may be funded.

- 74-50 = Fundable: Proposal meets the mission/vision of the SARE program, pertains to sustainable agriculture, and fulfills the review criteria. Proposal requirements are met, but could be improved. While fundable, the proposal may not receive funding due to competition from other proposals.

- 49-25 = Revise and resubmit: Proposal meets the mission/vision of the SARE program and pertains to sustainable agriculture, but there are sections of the proposal that don't fulfill review criteria or not all requirements of Call for Proposals have been met. Author is encouraged to revise and resubmit for the next year's competition per the reviewer's comments to strengthen the proposal.

- 24-0 = Not fundable: Proposal does not fit into the grant program applied for; proposal does not meet the mission/vision of the SARE program, does not pertain to sustainable agriculture, and/or does not meet the requirements of the Call for Proposals. The applicant has applied to the wrong grant program.

Once the technical reviewers complete their reviews, the Project Review Committee of Southern SARE's Administrative Council (Southern SARE's governing body) reads the high scoring proposals and meets virtually to discuss fundable proposals. This process roughly takes two weeks. The Project Review Committee convenes at the summer Administrative Council (AC) meeting (late July/early August) to finalize selections. Those are then recommended to the full Administrative Council and voted on for funding.

By late August you will be contacted regarding the status of your proposal, and a summary of the review comments for your proposal will be provided to you. If awarded a Graduate Student Grant, you will be asked to sign a contract once your proposal goes through a budget review process. If you sign the contract, you agree to conduct the activities outlined in your proposal. Any changes in budget or activities must receive prior Southern SARE approval. Grant funds are paid by reimbursement of allowable project expenses. Awardees must keep receipts of their expenditures for three (3) years after project completion.

Expectations for Funded Proposals

If the Southern SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you will expect the following:

Notification: Southern SARE selects Graduate Student Grant proposals during its summer Administrative Council meeting late July/early August of each year. Applicants will be notified via email soon after regarding the status of their project. All projects officially start September 1.

Budget Reviews and Contracting: Proposals selected for funding will undergo a budget review by Southern SARE. Any revisions or changes will be made prior to the proposal sent to University of Georgia (Southern SARE's host instituion) for contracting. Applicants will receive a subaward agreement by University of Georgia via email for signature. Once signed, the project is officially executed.

Invoicing: All project expenses are paid on a reimbursement basis. Applicants will receive an invoice template and be required to submit receipts and invoices during the course of their grant project to be reimbursed for their expenses.

Required Reporting: Graduate Student Grant recipients are required to submit an annual report each year their project is active, detailing the progress of their research. In the year the project ends, recipients are required to submit a final report, documenting their findings, outreach, and project impacts. Reports are submitted online to the SARE Grant Management System. Southern SARE will hold the final invoice submitted for reimbursement until the final report is submitted and approved. Read more about Southern SARE's Reporting Requirements.

Grant Management Support: Southern SARE staff is available throughout the life of the project to assist recipients on questions or issues related to their grant project. Management guidelines are available for PI changes, budget modifications, and no-cost extensions. Read more about Southern SARE's acounting and management guidelines.

Acknowledging Funding: As Southern SARE grantees work on their outreach plans and develop project products related to their grant, they are required by USDA-NIFA to acknowledge SARE funding in the materials that are developed. Read more about Southern SARE's guidelines for acknowledging funding.

Resources

Learn more about Southern SARE Graduate Student Grants, with information on grant writing tips.

Read more about managing a Graduate Student Grant project through the Southern SARE Graduate Student Grant Award and Management Process guide.

Contact your local SARE state ag coordinator for information on SARE.

Reach out to ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas) for practical sustainable agriculture resources.

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share search techniques for literature reviews, background research, and identifying experts in the field and pertinent USDA researchers and projects.

Looking for more sustainable agriculture research ideas? Visit SARE's national projects database to learn more about funded projects. Over 9,000 research and education projects have been funded nationally.

Graduate Student Grants Budget Checklist

The following are **allowable** budget items as a guide when putting together your budget. Justification of each budget item is required. Explain why each budget item and its cost are needed to conduct your project.

Personnel (Graduate Student Labor)

Graduate Students may be paid for the work being conducted on the project at 50 percent of the total project costs (not including Indirect Costs). The labor must be directly related to project activities, such as research and outreach activities and not tuition or a general stipend. **Do not list non-employee payments in this section. Those fall under Other Direct Costs. Secretarial/clerical must be exceptional in nature and justified as it relates to the project.**

- Job Title
- Salary (FTE; part-time; hourly rate; etc.)
- Length of time expected to work
- Description of the work to be conducted

Personnel (General Labor)

If general labor (such as an undergraduate student or lab technician) is required for the project, the budget for general labor is capped at 15 percent of the project total (not including Indirect Costs). This is identifiable work on the project and not a general stipend.

- Job Title
- Salary (FTE; part-time; hourly rate; etc.)
- Length of time expected to work
- Description of the work to be conducted

Fringe Benefits

Provide the total allowable fringe benefits.

- Salary X %Rate = Fringe Benefits

Non-expendable Equipment

Equipment equal to or greater than $5,000, and has a useful life of more than one (1) year.

- Type/description
- Cost
- Demonstrate how the item(s) relate to the project and are needed for the project

Materials, Supplies, and Technical Equipment

Materials and supplies and technical equipment are items directly related to the project activities and are needed for carrying out the objectives of the project. **Non-project items, such as office supplies, must be justified as being required for the project per the scope of the work outlined, and can be easily identified to the specific project.**

- Type/description of each item
- Cost
- Demonstrate how item(s) relate to project and are needed for the project

Publication Charges

Commercial printing or field-related publication charges for brochures, program materials, manuals, or other educational resources relating to the project. **Costs incurred for producing grant-required annual and final project reports are not reimbursable expenses. Publication costs associated with journal publications are not allowable expenses.**

- Type/description of each item
- Cost
- Demonstrate how item(s) relate to project and are needed for the project

Outreach

Expenses related to the project's outreach plan and outreach activities. This can include the costs of holding an event, such as a field day or workshop; snacks and refreshments, educational resources; and marketing and advertisement.

Allowable items include:

- Event facilities/Planning Spaces (such as community center, hotel meeting room, tents for educational programming)
- Technical equipment (such as audio/visual technologies)
- Materials and supplies needed for the event
- Marketing and advertisement; communications
- Travel for speakers and presenters only.
- Snacks refreshments **(Full meals including lunches and dinners, as well as breakfasts of any kind are not allowed).**

  Justification for snacks and refreshments include the support of the continuity of the event; or the event is being held at a remote location and food is not easily accessible. **UGA employee participants cannot be included.**

- Type/description of each item
- Cost, including an itemization for each item
- Demonstrate how the item(s) relate to the project and are needed for the project

Travel

Travel expenses can be associated with the project needed for the graduae student to conduct the research. For example, graduate students may claim mileage to and from their research plots. Travel can also be associated with the project outreach plan, such as travel, lodging and registration associated with presenting project results at a training event or workshop. **International travel is not allowed.**

- Origin/Destination
- Mileage per federal per diem rates
- Airfare
- Lodging (include cost per person per night)
- Food/refreshments per federal per diem rate (**breakfasts are not allowed**)
- Description of how the travel relates to project/outreach and why it's needed

Other Direct Costs

Direct project charges not include in other categories. Other direct costs can include:

- **Honorariums:** Provide recipient information (if known) or number expected, reason for need, and fee associated with the honorarium.
- **Fee for Services:** A fee for services is the cost of professional services by nonemployees of the lead institution/organization required for a project that is beyond the scope of the work the grant recipient can perform or provide. Fee for services covers work that is needed for the project, but the professional performing the work or skill is not actually working on the project.

  Examples of fee for services include: Lab/data analysis, survey development, graphic design, videography/ photography, transcription.

  When listing fee for services in the budget narrative:
  - Determine the cost of the service (per hour, flat rate, etc.);
  - Provide the nature and scope of the service in relation to the project;
  - Provide the qualifications of the individual/group
  - rendering the service;
  - Provide the fees charged by the individual/group for the service to be performed.

  A fee for service is not the same as a consultation.

- **Consultants:** Persons or Entities who provide advice for the project. Provide the name and organization of the consultant, a statement of work, and funds being charged to the project. Also provide a copy of the resume/vita.
- **Service Maintenance:** Maintenance contracts in direct correlation to use of equipment for the project (e.g. 50% use of equip for project, 50% of svc contract applied to budget costs).
- **Photocopying:** In-house copying (not commercial printing) for materials associated to the project.
- **Communications:** Mailings, postal faxes, telephone. They must be justified as relating to the project.

- Type/description of each item
- Cost
- Demonstrate how item(s) relate to project and are needed for the project

Indirect Costs

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Therefore, when preparing budgets, limit your request for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10 percent of total direct costs awarded. The Indirect Cost of 10 percent Total Direct Costs (TDC) is the maximum allowable. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable indirect cost is considered unallowable.

Modified Total Direct Costs

If your institution or organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may request a 10 percent de minimus indirect cost rate. The 10 percent de minimus rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC means total direct costs related to the award, such as labor, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, publications, consultant services and travel costs. MTDC excludes the following costs: equipment, capital expenditures, rental costs, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Indirect costs cannot be charged on the excluded costs.

To determine MTDC:

Total Direct Cost Amount – (minus) Excluded Costs Amount = MTDC Amount
MTDC Amount X 10 percent de minimus rate = IDC Total

Organizations that do not have a NICRA in place may also waive indirect cost recovery and request only direct research costs. If this option is selected, the organization is required to include in the award budget only those types of costs consistently treated as direct research costs by the organization. If your organization is waiving indirect costs, this must be noted in the budget narrative.

The maximum amount allowed for funding a Graduate Student Grant, even if indirect costs are entered, is still $22,000.

Review your budget thoroughly to ensure expenditures are allowable, proper justification has been provided, and the total direct costs and indirect costs add up correctly. This will aid tremendously in the timeframe it takes to process the award if we do not have to request budget revisions and further justification.

NOTE: If your institution is waiving indirect costs, this must be noted in the budget justification.

Federal Per Diem Rates Website: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates

Questions about your budget? Contact: Denise Quick at denise.quick@uga.edu or call (770) 229-3420

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Southern SARE Graduate Student Grant Technical Review Rubric

Section	Question in Call for Proposals in Grants Management System	From "How this proposal will be reviewed" in the Call for Proposals	What Reviewers are Looking For	Points
Graduate Student Qualifications	Briefly describe the experience of the graduate student relative to the project, and the role of the graduate student in the project.	Does the student (with the major professor's support) have the experience and qualifications to conduct the proposed work and complete the work within the proposed timetable.	The graduate student demonstrates the experience and knowledge to conduct the project and complete the work within the proposed time frame.	5
Statement of the Problem	Provide a clear description of the production/marketing problem farmers are facing. Indicate how the problem is related to, or affects, sustainable agriculture and discuss why the problem needs to be addressed. Your explanation should address one or more of the three pillars of sustainability: Farmer profit, environmental conservation, and community quality of life.	Does the applicant clearly describe the problem and why the problem needs to be addressed?	The project provides a clear description of a problem facing agriculture in the South, and identifies a need to finding a more sustainable solution. Addresses one or more of the three pillars of sustainability	15
Objectives	Provide a list of concise project objectives.	The Objectives can be realistically completed within the proposed time frame, and the project goals are feasible to obtain per the methods stated.	Objectives demonstrate clear goals of the project. They can be realistically completed within the proposed time frame.	10
Approaches and Methods	The Approaches and Methods section is where you will test your expected outcome through a research experiment or observational study. In this section you should outline: • The site where you will conduct your research; • Your experimental design if your research calls for one; • What you are measuring and the ways you will be measuring it; • The materials and supplies you will be using to conduct your research; • How you will collect your data, how often you will collect it, and what tools you will use; • How you will analyze your data, and what tools you will use; • How you will interpret your data and draw conclusions. The Approaches and Methods should demonstrate how your solution works in addressing the Statement of the Problem. Be	Is the Approaches and Methods clearly thought out and well designed so that useful and applicable results can be obtained? Does the Approaches and Methods align with the budget request?	Approaches and Methods effectively demonstrate how the solution would work in solving the stated problem. Potential results are practical and useful. Approaches and Methods outline what is needed in the budget.	25

Southern SARE Graduate Student Grant Technical Review Rubric

	specific in describing project activities.			
Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	Demonstrate how the project is relevant to sustainable agriculture. State how the project and the expected results contribute to agricultural sustainability. Demonstrate how your project is making an element of a farming system more sustainable, making sure that it is not making the whole system or another part of it less sustainable.	How does the project and its expected results contribute to sustainable agriculture? Is the project and its expected results a new and creative innovation? Does the project contribute to the growth of sustainable agriculture by building on and/or adding to existing knowledge? Is it a band-aid to conventional agriculture or does it move the needle in more sustainable farming practices?	The project demonstrates a clear, realistic relevancy to sustainable agriculture, and illustrates an integrated approach to healthy and resilient production and marketing systems.	20
Timeline	The timeline is an outline of project activities in a chronological timeline that states where, what, when and how long it will take for you to perform your research. Provide a timetable of the work to be completed from project start date to project end date. Be specific in describing project activities, including any recordkeeping throughout the research. Include your outreach plan in your timeline.	Based on the information in the timetable, can the project be effectively completed in the timetable provided?	Effective completion of the project based on the objectives and proposed solution.	10
Budget	The budget is a list of allowable expenses required to conduct your project. The items in your budget should align with the your Approaches and Methods. Fill in a budget and provide a justification for each allowable item listed in your budget. Refer to the budget checklist attached to this Call for Proposal, as well as the sample budget and budget justification as a guideline.	Is the budget request reasonable and realistic? Is it clear on what the funds will be spent on? Are the requested funds allowable? Are budget items itemized with clear justifications on how they will be used in the project?	Clear budget with allowable and realistic requests. Items are itemized and justified with clear descriptions of how they will be used in the project.	15